

**Ashland Public Schools  
School Improvement Plan  
Middle School**

87 West Union Street, Ashland, MA, 01721

**2020-2021**

**Respect  
Responsibility**

**District Blueprint for Continuous Student Improvement**

The Ashland Public Schools is a forward thinking district that cultivates the academic and social-emotional growth of each student through a supportive, collaborative, and innovative and challenging environment. Students will develop into self-motivated, resilient, life-long learners who will embrace their role as responsible contributors to a global society.

**District Improvement Priorities**

The four improvement priorities that guide our work at the district and school level:

**DIP#1: Promote Academic Excellence:** We will improve achievement for all students by providing individualized, equitable, and challenging opportunities in an environment that fosters growth and skill acquisition for each student.

**DIP#2: Cultivate Well-Being of All:** We will ensure student, faculty, and staff well-being by teaching strategies, skills, and competencies necessary to maintain and support social-emotional health.

**DIP#3: Engage Students, Families and Community as Partners in Learning:** We will continuously model a district environment based on collaboration, respect, and open lines of communication through partnerships with students, caregivers, community members, businesses, community-based organizations, and educational institutions.

**DIP#4: Champion Educator Excellence:** We will attract, develop, and retain highly qualified, passionate educators who are committed to the vision of Ashland Public Schools.

**Ashland Middle School Goals**

The following school goals aim to further and support the district strategic objectives through focused work that accounts for the strengths and needs of the individual school community:

Goal 1	Ashland Middle School will continue to improve achievement in an equitable and challenging environment so that all students reach state, district and individual learning goals.	DIP #1
Goal 2	Ashland Middle School will ensure student, faculty and staff well-being by teaching strategies, skills and competencies necessary to maintain and support social-emotional health.	DIP#2

Goal 3	Ashland Middle School will continue to open lines of communication by fostering a school environment based on collaboration, respect, partnerships with students and parents, businesses, and the entire Ashland Community.	DIP #3
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**Goal #1:** Ashland Middle School will continue to improve achievement in an equitable and challenging environment so that all students reach state, district and individual learning goals.

**District Alignment: DIP#1: Promote Academic Excellence:** We will improve achievement for all students by providing individualized, equitable, and challenging opportunities in an environment that fosters growth and skill acquisition for each student.

Stage:

- Planning
- In Progress

Start Date: (August 31, 2015)
End Date: Ongoing

Action Items:

Ashland Middle School will continue to close the achievement gap by scoring high growth (over 60%) in all grades in Math and ELA on standardized testing.

- A. Teachers and administrators will continue to analyze data to identify curriculum needs.
- B. Teachers will identify students in need of support and create ISSPs to create strategies and set student goals
- C. Teachers(in Teams) will utilize Discovery Block to increase remediation for students who scored in the Did Not Meet or Partially Met on MCAS tests. 75% of this group will achieve 50% growth for the 2018-2019 school year.
- D. New Goal for 2018-2019 School Year: ISSPs will be created in the area of Science for those students in need of support. The Science Department will be afforded time to determine criteria and write ISSPs for students. The department is looking to increase the number of students in scoring proficiency or above on Science MCAS.

Principal will analyze Next Generation MCAS data to determine success of Math curriculum and supports before the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year. Based on data analysis, students who are not meeting standards and meet set criteria will be offered Title 1 math services.

The RTI team will meet weekly to identify students in need of support and set goals for individual growth and success.

Vertical Curriculum Meetings shall occur during the school year to assess vertical alignment and address any alignment issues that may exist.

Teachers will be provided curriculum meeting time for professional development to continue to improve transitions from one grade to the next. This work includes alignment, assessment calibration and the creation of benchmark or common assessments.

AMS will review the number and services/supports of the ELL students in the building. Based on findings, personnel and budgetary requests/decisions will be put forward to address current and future needs of the program.

Indicators of Success:

Math and ELA achieve high levels of growth (60% or above) for each grade as measured by standardized tests. Title 1 math students achieve high levels of growth(60% or above) on ELA and Math tests.

Creation and implementation of ISSPs in the fall: analysis of data to show high growth (over 60%) for this cohort. Parents receive ISSPs in November.

75% of students scoring in Warning/Did Not Meet or Needs Improvement/Partially Met levels in MCAS will show over 50% growth for the 2018-2019 school year.

RTI – Based on individual data, appropriate interventions are implemented so that students may reach individual, state and district goal targets

ELL students, students with disabilities and students of color will show high growth from last year's MCAS SGP accountability data.

Science ISSPs will be created for those students in need of support. The Science Department will be afforded time to determine criteria and write ISSPs for students. MCAS data shows an increase in the number of students in scoring proficiency or above on Science MCAS.

A review of the number and services/supports of ELL students in the building is conducted. Based on findings, personnel and budgetary requests/decisions are put forward to address current and future needs of the program.

Narrative:

To achieve this goal, a two prong approach is being implemented. One goal focuses on data analysis to identify need areas for the curriculum while the other goal centers on meeting individual learning needs of students. By analyzing MCAS data and assessing student growth, teachers and administration can address growth areas and implement action items to target those areas. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education considers high growth (over a year's worth of growth) to be above 60%.

### Accomplishments

The following goals have been fulfilled within the past 2 years, and are currently in place.

Goal	District Alignment	Date Completed
AMS curriculum aligned to MA Common Core standards. Universal Backwards Design units created by teachers during professional development time.	DIP #1	School year 2015-2016
Science ISSPs were created and implemented. MCAS data to be analyzed before the 2019-2020 school year.	DIP #1	School year 2018-2019 and ongoing
Vertical Alignment/Meetings with AHS	DIP #1	School year 2015 and ongoing
AMS achieved 60% growth(overall) in both ELA and Math	DIP #1	School year 2015, 2016 and ongoing
AMS achieved target and growth goals for MCAS	DIP #1	School Year 2016-2017 and ongoing
ELL program examined. Personnel added to meet the needs of current and future students in the program.	DIP #1	School Year 2018-2019 and ongoing

**Goal #2:** Ashland Middle School will ensure student, faculty and staff well-being by teaching strategies, skills and competencies necessary to maintain and support social-emotional health.

**District Alignment: DIP#2: Cultivate Well-Being of All:** We will ensure student, faculty, and staff well-being by teaching strategies, skills, and competencies necessary to maintain and support social-emotional health.

Stage:

Planning  
 In Progress

Start Date: (August 31, 2015)

End Date: Ongoing

Action Items:

Ashland Middle School will continue the practice of “Family Reconnect Weekends” throughout the school year.

Ashland Middle School will offer a Cybersafety/Cyberbullying presentation or lessons to be delivered to all students during the school. Resources and helpful tips will be sent home to parents before and after the events.

Faculty will be provided professional development and training to learn about issues and warning signs relating to depression, suicide and/or mental health training. During the 2018-2019 School Year, Ashland Middle School launched the “See Something, Say Something” program run by Sandy Hook Promise. This training for staff and students focuses on safety and physical, social and emotional well-being. The application can be accessed by all students in the building.

AMS piloted the Naviance SEL program during the 2019-2020 school year. Our school will continue to evaluate and build upon the SEL experience for students at the middle school.

Partnering with the Ashland community, R and R Afternoons will be held at Ashland Middle School.

Indicators of Success:

At least three reconnect weekends occur over the course of the school year.

Successful cybersafety presentation occurs.

Faculty trainings/professional development will focus on mental health support.

AMS R and R afternoons occur in the spring.

Narrative:

Ashland Middle School has analyzed data from the biannual Metrowest Health Survey – the last survey was taken in November of 2018. Based on student survey data from 2016, AMS has set goals to support parents, students, and faculty to develop strategies, skills and tools necessary to maintain a healthy physical and mental well-being. Teachers and community members led three 45 minutes experiences that supported strategies and skills around stress reduction and physical and mental well-being. AMS staff was trained in DBT(Dialectical Behavioral Therapy) during professional development days in the spring of 2018. Mental Health Data from the 2018 Metrowest survey will be analyzed to determine progress and set future goals. The Naviance SEL program was piloted during the 2019-2020 school year.

### Accomplishments

The following goals have been fulfilled within the past 4 years, and are currently in place.

Goal	District Alignment	Date Completed
AMS has implemented “Family Reconnect Weekends”	DIP#2	2015-2016 school year and Ongoing
AMS Guidance pilots Online SEL program, Staff PD and faculty meetings focus on SEL and staff surveys analyzed	DIP#2	2018-2019 and Ongoing
AMS Counseling staff provides ongoing support for students in need	DIP#2	Ongoing
AMS has provided Cybersafety presentations to parents and students	DIP#2	2015-2016 and Ongoing
Professional Development for Faculty on SEL/mental Health Issues(Sandy Hook Promise in 2018-2019)	DIP#2	2016-2017 and Ongoing
AMS Successfully implemented R and R Afternoons	DIP#2	2016-2017 and Ongoing

**Goal #3:** Ashland Middle School will continue to open lines of communication by fostering a school environment based on collaboration, respect, partnerships with students and parents, businesses, and the entire Ashland Community.

**District Alignment DIP#3: Engage Students, Families and Community as Partners in Learning:** We will continuously model a district environment based on collaboration, respect, and open lines of communication through partnerships with students, caregivers, community members, businesses, community-based organizations, and educational institutions.

Stage:

- Planning
- In Progress

Start Date: (August 31, 2015)

End Date: (Ongoing)

Action Items:

Ashland will continue to communicate to parents and faculty using various technologies including weekly emails, Twitter, Website, and Blackboard messages.

Ashland Middle School will use Iparent to communicate and update students and parents on grades, assignments, attendance, and course recommendations.

Ashland Middle School will run an all school assembly in November to recognize local Veterans

Ashland Middle School will partner with businesses in the community to offer “R and R” afternoons. Teachers and community members will engage in various experiences with students focusing on stress reduction and positive physical and mental well-being.

MCAS data showed 4.9% chronic absenteeism at the middle school in 2017-2018. AMS will examine data around student absences and implement strategies to improve the number of students who miss 10% or more of the school year. Action items include: increasing family outreach, meetings and communications around the attendance policy. The new AMS SRO will play a significant role in the process. Progress measured by percentage(decrease) of chronically absent students in the 2018-2019 school year. DESE data will also serve as a measure. AMS will continue this goal in the 2020-2021 school year.

Indicators of Success:

An analysis of survey data continues to show that over 90% of families feel that AMS Communication is effective.

Parents have access to Iparent accounts and functions and are provided with a minimum of 4 opportunities per year to view Term grades.

Over 20 veterans attend the assembly in November with all grades participating in the event.

R and R afternoons provide experiences for students: 3 sessions with an average of 15 students in each session. At least 5 community businesses/members will offer sessions.

Progress on chronic absenteeism measured by percentage(decrease) of chronically absent students in the 2020-2021 school year. DESE data will also serve as a measure.

Narrative:

Ashland Middle School continues to strive to improve communication to parents in ways that are helpful and comprehensive. Ashland Middle School continues to use the Iparent portal, giving parents the opportunity to view student grades and performance on individual assignments. AMS will continue to explore ways to utilize the Iparent software to improve communication and efficiency.

**Accomplishments**

The following goals have been fulfilled within the past 3 years, and are currently in place.

<b>Goal</b>	<b>District Alignment</b>	<b>Date Completed</b>
Successful Iparent Launch and continued operation	DIP3#	2015 school year
Percentage of Chronic Absenteeism decreases	DIP#3	2018-2019 school year and ongoing
8 <sup>th</sup> grade Recommendations conducted paperless via Iparent	DIP #3	2015 school year and ongoing
R and R afternoons conducted in the spring	DIP #3	2015 school year and ongoing

Adult ELL course offered	DIP #3	2017 school year and ongoing
Participation in the Decisions at Every Turn Coalition	DIP #3	2013 school year and ongoing
5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Principal Coffees – 3 per year.	DIP #3	2014 school year and ongoing
Safety Committee Member	DIP #3	2013 school year and ongoing

## Glossary of Terms

**R and R Afternoons** – Rest and Relax afternoons held at AMS for the first time this spring. This year, AMS has focused on supporting the mental health and well-being of our students. These days, which were conducted in the afternoons on April 4th(for 6th grade and Team Green) and April 5th(for Team Purple and 8th grade), aimed to create positive experiences focused on mindfulness, stress management, and physical and mental relaxation. Teachers and community businesses host experiences for students in the afternoons.

**Achievement Gap** - Refers to any significant and persistent disparity in academic performance or educational attainment between different groups of students, such as white students and minorities, for example, or students from higher-income and lower-income households.

**MCAS** – The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System is designed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Law of 1993. MCAS tests are given to all public school students in Massachusetts and measures performance based on the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework learning standards. There are 3 tests students participate in: ELA(English Language Arts), Math, and Science and Technology/Engineering. During the 2014/2015 school year, AMS 8<sup>th</sup> grade students tested in Science and Technology/Engineering.

**ISSP** - Individualized Student Success Plan. ISSPs are created by Team teachers in the fall for those students who scored warning or needs improvement on MCAS tests in the spring. Teachers create these plans to implement strategies and create an action plan so these students may reach state and school learning goals.

**Vertical Meetings**: Teacher meetings that take place during professional development days to improve transition from one building to the next. 8<sup>th</sup> grade Ashland Middle School teachers and counselors meet with Ashland High School staff to discuss recommendations for 9<sup>th</sup> grade, skill development, curriculum alignment, etc.

**PBIS** – Positive Behavior Intervention and Support. All schools in the district have adopted Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS). At AMS we are proud to have a national, data-driven model that supports us in establishing a positive school culture. PBIS starts with establishing core values and teaching the behaviors we expect students to show in living those values. PBIS also emphasizes the importance of recognizing students who meet these behavioral expectations.

**Naviance**: The Naviance program is a universal, classroom based SEL program that addresses the core competencies and problematic behaviors shown to affect student success in school and life. Some topics include emotion management, goal setting, and school to career pathways.

**Advisory** – 10 minute period during the school day when AMS students meet with their mentor teacher or advisor. This is a period when teachers can check in with students and many have a snack during this time. AMS guidance will also run initiatives during this period such as Diversity, Kindness, and Cyberbullying.

**Metrowest Health Survey** - Since 2006, the Metrowest Adolescent Health Survey has been administered every other year to monitor trends in health and risk behaviors and identify emerging health issues at the local and regional levels. With over 41,000 students surveyed in 2014 alone, this regional census is one of the largest adolescent health surveys in the country. Yet it maintains a local focus, with the goal of providing comprehensive data on issues of local concern to inform schools and communities as they strive to enhance policies and programs, improve prevention efforts, and set priorities for achieving a healthier youth population. In Ashland, the 2014 MWAHS was administered to middle school students in grades 6 through 8 and high school students in grades 9 through 12 this past November.

**Mentoring Program/initiative**: AMS students trained in leadership so they may mentor (and connect) with incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to ease transitions to begin the school year.

**ASAP** – Ashland Substance Abuse Prevention. Group of students (grades 6-8) led by an advisor to provide information to AMS around substance abuse prevention.

**Shout outs** – Individual AMS students recognized during announcements for reflecting the AMS core values of Respect and Responsibility.

**STEM** – Science Technology Engineering and Math. The AMS STEM teacher works with core academic teachers to deliver the STEM curriculum to students.

**Discovery** – “D” period class in the AMS schedule that rotates during the day. During Discovery, teachers conduct interdisciplinary units, enrichment opportunities and remediation. Specialized instruction, Band and Chorus also occur during this period.

**UBD** – Understanding by Design. Thousands of educators across the country use the Understanding by Design framework, created by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, to get a handle on standards, align programs to assessments, and guide teachers in implementing a standards-based curriculum that leads to student understanding and achievement.

**iparent** – Software that allows parents to periodically view student attendance, grades, assignments and course recommendations.

**RTI** – Response to Intervention. This is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI team meets weekly to identify students in need of support and sets measurable learning goals for those individuals.

### **Site Council Members**

**David DiGirolamo**

**Malcolm Beckwith**

**Brandi Kinsman**

**Maura Hunter**

**Tina Fitanides**

**Tracey Terry**

**Jake Smith**

### **Approvals**

Approved by Site Council on: May 23, 2020

By: David DiGirolamo Title: Principal

Approved by School Committee on \_\_\_\_\_